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ABSTRACT

Resource allocation processes in universities and in schools of education trap educational administration programs in a circle of disadvantage. A framework for analyzing the relationship between university resource allocation and the ability of schools of education and departments of educational administration to engage in effective curriculum reform is proposed. Underfunding of schools of education and departments of educational administration is discussed followed by a segment on the mechanisms that promote resource-allocation imbalance, including low program costs, internal allocation of funds, high student demand, and power politics and external competition. The last section deals with primary and secondary effects of systematic underfunding and high student demand. (10 references) (SI)

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Educational Administration Programs:
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Educational Administration Programs: The Cash Cow of the University?

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NOTES ON REFORM

Notes on Reform is a publication of the National Policy Board for Educational Administration. The purpose of this series is to disseminate information about programs, projects, ideas, or issues related to the improvement of preparation programs for school administrators. Program descriptions, project evaluations, strategies for improvement, research reports, policy proposals, think pieces -- or any other form of information about innovations or proposed program improvements in educational administration -- could be a source of ideas for others interested in reforming our field. Requests should be forwarded to staff headquarters for the National Policy Board: University of Virginia, Curry School of Education, 405 Emmet Street, Charlottesville, VA 22903, attention Terry A. Astuto or Linda C. Winner (Co-Editors), or Deborah A. Polen (Assistant Editor), (804-924-0583).

Educational Administration Programs:
The Cash Cow of the University?

Many departments of educational administration are attempting to respond to the observations and concerns of practitioners and numerous other critics regarding program quality and relevance. However, a major obstacle to reform, and one that is particularly difficult to overcome, is that these programs are often treated as the cash cows of universities, i.e., as low cost, resource generation units.

In this paper we draw on our perceptions and experiences to demonstrate how resource allocation processes in universities and in schools of education trap educational administration programs in a circle of disadvantage. Mechanisms that promote resource-expenditure imbalance include low program costs, processes for internal allocation of funds, high student demand, and external competition. To bring about significant improvement in the quality of educational administration programs, we need to understand and address institutional barriers to program reform.

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Educational Administration Programs:
The Cash Cow of the University?

In the past few years there has been renewed interest in revising programs that prepare administrators for service in the public schools. Spurred by national reports (Griffiths, et al., 1988; McCarthy et al., 1988; National Policy Board, 1989) and external funding agents such as the Danforth Foundation, many educational administration departments are in the process of program revision and are attempting to address the concerns raised by practitioners and numerous other critics. As these educational administration units begin their redesign process, it is apparent that there are obstacles to program reform inherent in the structure and expectations of the larger university. Some of these obstacles are rooted in the adherence of schools of education to the model and standards espoused by the liberal arts tradition rather than that of the professional schools. (See Clifford and Guthrie, 1988, for a lengthy discussion of this issue.)

Another obstacle to reform, and one that is particularly difficult to overcome, is that schools of education in general and educational administration departments in particular are often employed as low cost, resource generation units. That is, they are often expected to enroll large numbers of students within a minimal cost environment to generate excess resources that are then re-directed throughout the school, but mostly throughout the university. Consequently, educational administration departments, despite generating a large revenue base through student credit hours, do not share the benefits of credit-hour generation at the same rate as other units in the university.

Because schools of education are money makers on most campuses, in the sense that they bring in more revenue than they generate in costs (Clifford and Guthrie,

1988), altering the system may have school- and university-wide implications. Hence, inertia is likely to prevail.

Peseau (1982) argues that most agencies recognize the existence of a relationship between the resources they have and what they attempt to achieve. But teacher education, he argues, is an exception, attempting to do much more than its funding permits it to do well. This observation also applies to educational administration programs. Enrollment driven universities are dependent on high enrollments in at least some units to obtain overall funding, and often support other units that are less self-sufficient but may be more prestigious. Students are a critical resource in enrollment driven funding formula situations. Unfortunately, educational administration departments and schools of education apparently do not have the power in the internal resource allocation processes that results in the ability to reap the full financial benefit of enrolling large numbers of students. So, on the one hand, deans and almost everyone else chastise administrator preparation programs for their poor quality; but as soon as the notions of equity in resource distribution or enrollment control are raised as possible or necessary corollaries of program improvement, the light turns red. To understand and overcome barriers to the reform of educational administration programs, we must first understand the resource allocation processes at the university and school of education.

In this paper we propose a framework for analyzing the relationship between university resource allocation and the ability of schools of education and departments of educational administration to engage in effective curriculum reform. We make some assumptions. First, educational administration programs generally have too many students and too few resources and an essential ingredient in program improvement is control of the resource-workload balance. Second, our observations apply to educational administration programs in institutions in which

resources are derived from credit-hour funding formulas, but in which there is also some local control over the distribution of those resources within the university system.

Underfunding of Schools of Education

For decades schools of education have been asked to do more than funding would adequately support. Evidence from as far back as the 1935 federally sponsored National Survey of Education consistently demonstrates the fact that schools of education are seriously underfunded in comparison to other units on campus and in relation to the mission they are expected to fulfill (Clifford and Guthrie, 1988, p. 182). There is also more recent support for this argument (Peseau, 1979, 1982; Peseau and Orr, 1980). For example, Peseau and Orr (1980) compared the relative cost index of undergraduate, master's, and post master's programs using the "Texas formula", which is a widely used index of program complexity that was developed to assist universities with resource allocation. They reported that teacher education was indexed at 1.04 in contrast with 1.51 for agriculture, 2.07 for engineering, and 2.74 for nursing. Indexes at the master's level placed education at 2.30, compared to 3.27 for business, and 5.36 for science. The greatest disparity existed at the post master's level. Education was indexed at 8.79, business at 13.45, agriculture 16.52, nursing and engineering 17.60, fine arts 17.71, and veterinary medicine at 20.53. The index suggests that universities view education as a relatively simple endeavor which implies that schools of education, in comparison to other academic units, require less funding to sustain their programs. Peseau and Orr (1980) illustrate how this belief is operationalized. From a nine institution study of the ratio of dollars produced through state funds and tuition to the cost of the program, they concluded that all nine schools of education were underfunded by 12% to 62%. Indeed, in 1982-83 the average cost to educate an

undergraduate teacher candidate was $718 less than the cost to educate a K-12 public school student. Based on these data it seems that schools of education are not receiving resources commensurate with those generated. Further, when examining cost as a function of program size, programs with high enrollment are less costly than smaller programs (Peseau and Orr, 1980, p. 102). From an economic standpoint, the larger the teacher education program, the more resources it will generate to help fund other, less profitable units. Large programs not only generate more tuition dollars; they are also more efficient. The pragmatic implication for schools of education is that the university is likely to resist attempts to downsize. Not only would the university lose valuable resources outright, but the program would be less cost efficient.

Underfunding of Departments of Educational Administration

Just as the school of education serves as a revenue source for other units in the university, the educational administration department often shoulders a large portion of the responsibility for generating credit hours at the graduate level within the school. Upon examination of the school of education structure it is fairly evident how this comes about. Many departments fulfill a service obligation (research, psychology, foundations, etc.) and, while they may have many graduate students in their programs, they are not the "home" departments for the bulk of the students for a number of reasons. First, these programs are often designed for full-time study with year-long internships and/or day-time classes and are not amenable to part-time study. Second, with a few exceptions, they do not lead to advanced certification necessary for career advancement in the area of K-12 education. Third, the nature of the major may not be attractive to many practitioners since it is often foreign to their current role as teachers and frequently entails subject matter in which they have little interest or which they

did not enjoy as undergraduates (e.g., statistics, math, philosophy). Finally, admission requirements and/or program requirements are generally more demanding than those found in educational administration. For example among ninety-four intended majors of graduate students in 1985-86, the average GRE scores of educational administration students ranked fourth from the bottom -- ninety-first (Griffiths, Stout, and Forsyth, 1988). As a result of these forces large numbers of students choose to major in educational administration. For example, at our institution 80% of the graduate students are in either educational administration or curriculum and instruction.

As a result of these forces working in combination, a significant percentage of the coursework, adjusted by department size, in typical graduate schools of education is either taken through the educational administration department or by students majoring in educational administration. Clear evidence of this phenomenon can be seen from examination of the sheer number of administration degree or certification holders. Bliss (1988) estimated that the number of holders of administrative certification who do not hold administrative positions averaged approximately 5,000 per state.

While the revenue these students generate through course hours is great and typically represents a significant amount of total credit hour production, at least at the graduate level, the resources to support the program are predictably not commensurate with those received by other departments within the school. A typical educational administration program has 2 FTE professors (McCarthy et al, 1988, p. 20). Some programs have no full-time staff. Obviously, it is not possible to conduct a sustained program with so few full-time staff members. Thus, many departments are supplemented by local practitioners who serve as part-time adjunct faculty. Although there are quality issues raised by this practice, it is certainly

cost effective since the university realizes a sizable savings every time an adjunct professor is employed. The employment of adjunct faculty could be a savings for other departments within the school and university. However, the pool of available individuals with appropriate advanced degrees is minimal in most other fields compared to that in educational administration (every town has at least one credentialed educational administrator). Thus, other units would find it difficult or impossible to engage in such a practice, even if they chose to do so.

The high credit-hour generation by educational administration students and non-degree students seeking certification, coupled with the employment of few full-time professors and the use of adjunct faculty, result in substantial savings for the school and university which can be allocated to other units or departments.

Mechanisms That Promote Resource-Expenditure Imbalance

The relatively low net return of resources characteristic of educational administration programs is a function of the cost of the program and the prevalent resource allocation decision models at the university and school level. The lower the program cost, the fewer resources need to be returned for the unit to be considered equitably funded. In fact, the perception of the adequacy of funding can actually be badly distorted depending on program costs. For example, department members may actually believe that the department is well funded if money is available for support activities (e.g., graduate students, research, clerical assistance, and travel). In reality, however, this funding might have been derived from "shrinkage" due to unfilled positions or the employment of more cost effective adjunct faculty. A second factor is the university's and school's own view of the "net worth" of the program in relation to that of other units and how that translates into resource allocation.

Low Program Costs

Program costs can usually be partitioned into three areas -- equipment, facilities, and personnel. Equipment and facility needs for most educational administration programs as currently configured are minimal. Unlike other units on campus, or even within the school of education, which may require laboratories, demonstration equipment, auditoriums, gyms, etc., typical educational administration programs can function with a $1.98 box of chalk and/or a simple overhead projector. In fact, almost any facility is appropriate. Thus, it is quite easy (and common) to transport a course to an off-campus location -- most commonly a public school district's facility -- where school districts welcome the chance to offer university courses "on-site." Indeed, if a local administrator is appointed the adjunct professor, other clerical and support equipment would likely be available at no cost. In effect, by employing such a practice, the university can save substantial overhead costs and at the same time garner support from the local students who find the on-site location more convenient. Because universities have become accustomed to this lack of dependence on university-wide resources and facilities, any attempts by the educational administration department to restructure its program in a way that would result in a more costly instructional delivery system or even to use existing resources (e.g., computer center, library) are likely to be resisted. Innovative teaching techniques such as extended internships, computer simulations, or the use of videotapes and case studies are not likely to receive more than symbolic monetary support. As Cuban (1984) observed, universities and schools of education are only likely to support first order curriculum changes, not changes that involve significant restructuring.

Personnel costs represent the other major program expenditure. Because of large, readily available sources of adjunct faculty and the relatively low cost of

these part-timers, many programs have become dependent on these individuals. Many school administrators are anxious to become associated with the university and adjunct status carries with it a certain amount of prestige. In addition, since educational administration courses are typically offered at night or during the summer, adjunct professors can participate without interfering with their full-time jobs. Finally, the structure and coursework of preparation programs in educational administration foster an overemphasis on the importance and relevance of the experiential knowledge base. A local superintendent is thus regarded as an expert in anything from personnel, to law, to facility management.

Internal Allocation of Funds

Three resource allocation models are discussed in the meager research on the university resource allocation process. The first presumes that there are elements of rationality inherent in the resource allocation process (Chaffee, 1983). In order for rationality to obtain, there must be clearly identified goals and an attempt to weigh the consequences of alternatives relative to the ability of each to maximize goal attainment. Chaffee (1983), in fact, found some aspects of Stanford University's budget process to work in a rational fashion.

More commonly, however, resource allocation is described as a bureaucratic or coalitional process (Pfeffer and Salancik, 1974; Hills and Mahoney, 1978; Hackman, 1985; Ashar and Shapiro, 1988). The coalitional model, which focuses on power and politics in the allocation process, has proven useful and interesting to researchers of the university resource allocation process. An examination of models based on this perspective suggests critical variables that could help us examine the relationship between the allocation process and the inability of educational administration programs to limit student enrollment in the name of program improvement.

The resource dependence perspective argues that power in decision making is a function of a unit's contribution of scarce and critical resources. Depending on how criticality is defined, these resources are external research funding, endowment funds, or students. The chief developers of the resource dependence perspective (Pfeffer and Salancik, 1974) found that external funds correlated positively with unit power in decision making in such a way that units that brought in more external research dollars gained more seats on the university research and grants committee. Thus, a circle of advantage seems to operate. Those who already have resources tend to be in positions to influence further decisions about resources. This would not seem to be the case with educational administration programs.

However, Pfeffer (1980) notes that merely providing the valued resources is not sufficient. The unit must be able to control access to the resources through increases and decreases in the resource. This does apply to educational administration programs. For example, our department's prerogative to control access to these resources is being questioned. So too is our ability to control access to the resources that we generate. The school of education and the university do not want to relinquish that power to us. Part of the problem in our own case is that the university has come to rely on student enrollment to generate much needed operating as well as slack resources. It is much easier to accomplish programmatic changes with slack or discretionary funds than by reallocating the base budget. Therefore, the competition for control of discretionary resources is extreme.

In times of resource scarcity that seem to be normal for most state higher education systems, coalitional explanations of budgeting are found to be more accurate than bureaucratic models (Hills and Mahoney, 1978). In other words, when

resources are scarce, power is more influential than universalistic criteria (Cyert and March, 1986). An example of this occurred this year when our dean was successful in negotiating the highest percentage raise for our school. This action not only impinges financially on other schools within the university, but signals a shift in the historically relative positions of schools.

In the research on university resource allocation, most of which was undertaken under conditions of retrenchment, the notion of centrality or criticality has been paramount. What constitutes centrality for purposes of funding? Hackman (1985) argues that a unit's centrality affects its power to obtain scarce resources. She defined centrality in relation to the university's mission and found that mission interacted with internal resources, environmental power, and resource negotiation strategies to produce allocations. For example, core units (e.g., teaching units such as the college of liberal arts or professional schools) gain internal resources (over and above their base budgets) when their negotiation strategies emphasized their own needs and when they could obtain critical resources from the environment (e.g., students) for their own use. Peripheral units were more successful when they demonstrated their utility to core units.

Building on Hackman's study, Ashar and Shapiro (1988) developed a different definition of the concept of centrality. Their definition focuses on "the centrality of one unit's activities in the work flow of the organization" (Hickson, et al., 1971, cited in Ashar and Shapiro, 1988, p. 276). Ashar and Shapiro's research on centrality in a college of liberal arts and sciences is directly relevant to our problem. They argued that a unit's centrality within the work flow of a school or college can be measured by examining the number of non-major students who take courses in the unit. In other words, how critical are a unit's classes to the school

or college? To what extent do non-majors "need" educational administration courses?

Other important measures of centrality considered by Ashar and Shapiro (1988) include: the number of research collaborations with faculty in other units; the number of teaching collaborations; the number of broad classes offered; and the number of non-major students registered for classes. Involvement in the work flow of the school influences resource acquisition. Ashar used this concept of centrality along with three other departmental characteristics -- productivity, external support, and paradigm development -- to predict change in faculty size in a college's departments. So her dependent variable was one specific measure of resource allocation. She predicted, of course, that unproductive, peripheral, unsupported and low-paradigm departments would lose more faculty than central, productive, well-supported and high-paradigm departments. The results showed that centrality was significant and second only to productivity in predicting change in faculty size.

<u>High Student Demand</u>

Programs cannot be "cash cows" if there is not student demand. Student credit hour demand represents an important resource for the university. The larger and more stable the student base, the larger the potential source of income. Educational administration programs represent an important source of credit hour generation for several reasons. First, the supply of students is almost endless and can be increased by various marketing techniques such as making the program more accessible to students. Every active teacher is required to obtain additional graduate credits either for continued re-certification or to progress on the salary schedule; thus, the demand is constant. Although teachers could pursue advanced degrees in their areas of teaching specialty, they often migrate instead to educational administration programs. Master's degrees in the content areas are

typically more difficult to obtain, are often designed only for full-time students, and may not lead to advanced levels of certification. Since degree or certification programs in educational administration may provide an avenue for career and salary advancement and are often sufficient for re-certification, they are a logical choice.

From a cost standpoint, educational administration students are ideal from the perspective of the university. They are typically older than most graduate students; have stable and respected positions; do not require many university resources in their program because they are infrequently on campus; and do not require scholarships and/or assistantships because they are already gainfully employed.

Power Politics and External Competition

Enrollment driven funding formulas and the pressure to generate credit hours or lose even more resources force educational administration programs to admit an excessive number of students. Several forces operate to create this situation. Educational administration programs are typically graduate-level only. There are not large numbers of undergraduates to support low graduate student-faculty ratios. Perhaps even more important is the external environment of competition for students that seems to be growing. Even if we cannot handle more students and the field does not need as many administrators as we prepare, there is a press not to restrict admissions because it gives other institutions a reason to invade "our" territory with all kinds of administration courses taught hundreds of miles from the home institution with adjunct faculty of uneven preparation.

Loss of influence throughout the university's undefined "catchment" area might lead to loss of student enrollment and lessening of political support (and resources) through a shrinkage of the power base. The deliverance of a quality program designed to prepare a limited number of very bright students for leadership roles within the schools is less important from the university's or school's standpoint

than maintaining a presence in the field by serving a large majority of public school administrators and teachers.

Primary and Secondary Effects

Despite calls for a reduction in student enrollment, educational administration programs continue to admit large numbers of students. In our own institution we have a total of 300 part-time students and 137 FTE which translates into 70 students (32 FTE) per FTE faculty member. Given that one recommended student faculty ratio is 7:1 for doctoral students and 12:1 for masters students (Peseau, 1982), it is clear that educational administration programs have an excessive number of students for the available resources to adequately support and place. To accommodate student demand (which must be done if surplus revenues are to be generated) professors must maintain high advisement loads (30-50 is not uncommon) and teach, by graduate school standards, large classes (some classes in our institution run over 40 students per section). Class size is often exacerbated by the necessity of offering low enrollment classes at off-site locations to accommodate specific constituent groups, which serves to increase the size of other classes. Predictable course sequences and/or offerings are often precluded by the lack of professors available to teach the courses and the press to offer many options to maintain high enrollments. In spite of the National Policy Board's (1989) recent recommendations about educational administration doctoral programs, consistent, coherent programs in education administration will not be developed and implemented if excessive credit-hour generation requirements continue.

An obvious secondary effect of systematic underfunding and high student demand is the reduction in time and resources for educational administration faculty to sustain research. A less obvious secondary consequence is the covert message sent to other departments within the school of education and other units

the university. Long known as "the department that hands out all those degrees to night-time students," professors from other disciplines are often wary of association with educational administration departments, which weakens the status of educational administration departments within the university. Finally, increased student loads, lack of adequate internal resources, and a press by the clients for more involvement with schools decrease opportunities to become involved in university service, which might lead to higher visibility within the university system, and thus place the department in a better position to acquire more resources.

Conclusion

In this paper we have argued that in order to bring about significant improvement in the quality of educational administration programs and subsequently in the quality of school administrators, we must understand institutional barriers to program reform. Furthermore, we argue that one of the specific mechanisms that works to the disadvantage of program reform in educational administration is the fact that slack institutional resources are generated by high student credit hours coupled with low program cost. Excess resources produced under these conditions are then distributed to other units. In order for this to work, educational administration programs must generate large numbers of student credit hours and have low resource needs. Thus, we are kept dependent on student credit hours just to maintain stable budgets and are not provided with adequate, much less additional, resources for such luxuries as graduate assistants, travel, or innovative teaching tools.

What we have suggested in this paper is largely based on conjecture supported by perceptions of our own experience. There is little evidence of attempts to explore empirically the issues we have suggested. The next step is to develop a

develop a model to test our assertions. Such a model would establish that, compared to our counterparts in other professional schools, educational administration programs are underfunded. Using indicators of program resources and cost, a funding ratio can be calculated. Second, we propose using Ashar and Shapiro's (1988) operational definition of centrality as a starting point for identifying explanatory variables. This kind of research would extend current research on funding in schools of education by using the funding ratio as the dependent variable(s) and measures of centrality as the independent variable(s).

As noted in this paper, dependence on high student credit hour production has implications for program reform. Some of these are ethical issues, such as providing meaningful preparation for school leaders, recruiting minority applicants, and addressing the continuing difficulties in placement of women. Others have direct implication for the work lives and success of faculty members. Unless we seek to understand more fully the institutional mechanisms that inhibit or facilitate reform and develop strategies based on this understanding, educational administration programs will remain caught in a circle of disadvantage and continue to be the cash cow of the university.

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ABOUT THE NATIONAL POLICY BOARD FOR EDUCATIONAL ADMINISTRATION

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The National Policy Board consists of representatives from the following ten member organizations:

- American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education
- American Association of School Administrators
- Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development
- Association of School Business Officials
- Council of Chief State School Officers
- National Association of Elementary School Principals
- National Association of Secondary School Principals
- National Council of Professors of Educational Administration
- National School Boards Association
- University Council for Educational Administration

The Board's charter outlines three purposes:

(1) To develop, disseminate, and implement professional models for the preparation of educational leaders;

(2) To increase the recruitment and placement of women and minorities in positions of educational leadership; and

(3) To establish a national certifying board for educational administrators.